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AIKEN WEISS/COURTESY ARTHOUSE FILMS

JULIUS SHULMAN, 1910–2009

The career of Julius Shulman, who died of heart failure on July 15 at age 98, blossomed along with modernism itself, and with the dynamic image of California, where the American dream seemed freshest and most attainable, and where the rules of conformity seemed weakest. He loved modernism, its truth in materials and lightness, and its open embrace of the landscape, said his daughter Judy McKee, and he loved promoting the movement to a wider audience that had once been wary of it. “He

lived a charmed life,” she said.

Shulman, who was born in Brooklyn on October 10, 1910, died just two months shy of his 99th birthday, and—with the exception of a short-lived retirement during the rise of postmodernism, which he detested—had been continuously working until the beginning of this year, when his health began to decline. In his later years he collaborated with photographer Juergen Nogai.

“He completely changed our

continued on page 12

SF'S RISING TIDES COMPETITION ANNOUNCES WINNERS



Kuth Ranieri's ventilated levee scheme.

COURTESY KUTH RANIERI

ON HIGHER GROUND

An hour into its review of the entries to Rising Tides, an ideas competition hosted by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) to combat sea-level rise in the Bay Area, the jury was swamped. Of 130 submissions from 18 countries, 50 concepts made the initial cut. In a surprise twist, not one but six winners were selected to share the \$25,000 grand prize. The winners were announced on July 14 at the San Francisco Ferry Building.

The winning entries represent three approaches to the problem of tidal rise: incremental, technological, and communicative. In the category of incremental, “Evolutionary Recovery,” by

Yumi Lee and Yeon Tae Kim of San Francisco firm LANDplus Design, addresses the problem in stages: the creation of a physical barrier to protect major shoreline infrastructure; relocation of developments to newly created high ground; and adaptation of wetlands to function as natural flood barriers. Meanwhile, Wright Huaiche Yang and J. Lee Stickles of San Francisco firm SWA Group proposed an adaptable green infrastructure in “Topographical Shifts at the Urban Waterfront.”

With a more technological intervention in mind, Craig Hartman and his team at SOM's San Francisco office drafted the “BayArc,” a cable-reinforced membrane **continued on page 11**

STALLING OUT?

AN'S 3RD ANNUAL DEVELOPER'S ISSUE SEEKS A SILVER LINING IN THE SLOWDOWN, PLUS LA'S SMALL LOTS LAW. PAGES 14–19

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STATE SLASHES BILLIONS IN REDEVELOPMENT FUNDS

Budget Bummer

The California budget that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed on July 28 was rife with spending cuts across the board, from education to health care, parks, and law enforcement. But a \$2.1 billion cut to redevelopment funds—\$1.7 billion for the current **continued on page 4**

SAN JOSE'S NEW ARRIVAL.
SEE PAGE 06



COURTESY GENSER



The proposed cable-stayed span (center) would join the downtown with southeast Portland.

COURTESY TRIMET

PORTLAND MULLS BEAUTY VS. BUDGET IN PROPOSED CROSSING

A BRIDGE NOT FAR ENOUGH

Portland, Oregon, sometimes called Bridge City, is known for its many gorgeous crossings, but it has been more than 30 years since a new span has been built across the

Willamette River near downtown. That will soon change, however. With the planning of the Portland-Milwaukee Light Rail Project, which will connect the **continued on page 7**



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PUBLISHER
Diana Darling

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William Menking

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Julie V. Iovine

CALIFORNIA EDITOR
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WEST COAST SALES AND MARKETING
Erica Springer

ASSISTANT MARKETING MANAGER
Sarah Theobald

CIRCULATION ASSISTANT
Monica Bond

EDITORIAL INTERNS
Victoria Monjo
Elisabeth Neigert

CONTRIBUTORS

PAUL ADAMSON / YOSH ASATO / KENNETH CALDWELL /
TIM CULVAHOUSE / GREG GOLDIN / GUNNAR HAND /
AMARA HOLSTEIN / MICHELLE KANG / SAM HALL
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NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL

Architects have long complained about being shut out of the development process. Every project, it seems, is led by a client who knows little about architecture, and by a contractor whose interests conflict with the architect's. And both parties have more power than the put-upon designer.

Most architects are obviously well-trained in design, and even familiar with technical areas like engineering, construction, and project management. But not in business. This is often something they figure out as they go along. In order to thrive, and to make our way out of future recessions, architects will have to change that. The first step is to make architectural education include training in business, and to teach skills like management, marketing, fee structuring, and design-build, among many others.

As of now only a small handful of schools offer business curricula related to architecture. Woodbury University offers a Master of Architecture in Real Estate Development, taught by San Diego architect-developers Ted Smith and Jonathan Segal, among others. The program covers the ins and outs of the development process, and many of San Diego's most successful architect-developers have graduated from the course.

Another program, at California College of the Arts, offers an MBA in Design Strategy, which teaches artists and a few architects how to navigate the business world. Students in the program take courses and studios in design, marketing, sustainability, and entrepreneurship, all focusing on experience and not "canned data," as Nathan Shedroff, who leads the program, points out. Along with these two programs, several design—but not architecture—schools offer joint business and design degrees, like the one at the Illinois Institute of Technology. And a small number of architecture programs do offer a smattering of professional practice classes.

Asked why he thought few schools offered business courses, Shedroff, who studied architecture at UC Berkeley and auto design at Art Center, pointed to the culture of art and architecture schools. "I think a lot of it is that students go into these areas specifically because they don't want to do quantitative work," he said. "They're not interested in numbers or set formulas or the standardization of solutions. They gravitate to what are seen as creative disciplines. But pretty much anyone in a company should be creative."

That's exactly the point. Business can be just as creative as architecture. Shedroff noted that many creative types see business as representing everything that's wrong with the world. But that isn't the case, either. "Students need this kind of experience if they want the kind of influence they deserve," said Shedroff.

And now is the perfect time to try to change the architect's role. Without business know-how in a time like this, many firms might as well pack it in. And as the Obama Administration's chief of staff Rahm Emanuel likes to say, in order to change the status quo, we should never let a good crisis go to waste. **SAM LUBELL**

BUDGET BUMMER continued from front page
fiscal year, plus \$350 million next year—will make a major dent in design and construction spending. What's worse, opponents of the cuts believe they will set off a new round of delays, further depressing the state's development prospects.

"This is probably the most critical vein within the state budget that is related to the capital projects architects work on," said John Kaliski, president of the AIA's Los Angeles chapter. "This will lead directly to architects not proceeding with work or getting started on new projects."

The state's 397 authorities cover 745 redevelopment areas, ranging from the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles, which is losing \$70 million, to the Waterford Redevelopment Agency, serving a town of 7,000 in Stanislaus County, which will be out \$150,000. The neighboring town of Riverbank is losing \$480,000. "That's big money to them," said John Shirey, executive director of the California Redevelopment Association, an advocacy group. "Riverbank is just a small, little town, and it can hardly afford to lose \$480,000."

The redevelopment authorities dole out cash raised by local property taxes to support privately developed projects deemed to serve a public benefit, which can be anything from Skid Row housing to a new stadium. The redevelopment program has its critics, though. They say it creates more boondoggles than benefits—a 36-hole golf course in Palm Springs, for example.

Karen Chappel, director of UC Berkeley's Center for Community Innovation, said that when it comes to deciding between building or paying welfare checks, she is inclined to slash the former. "In a way, there's a lot fewer people hurt if you raid from redevelopment," she said. "Some projects are good, but some are just handouts to well-connected developers."

But agency advocates worry that the state's economic recovery could suffer because of the cuts. According to the California Redevelopment Association, every \$1 spent by the agencies is matched by \$6 in private funds that then generate an additional \$7 in economic activity. "It's utterly backwards," Shirey said. "We like to call it an anti-economic stimulus."

Shirey noted that about 150,000 construction-related jobs have been lost over the last year, and predicted that the budget cuts will cost the design and construction industries an additional 164,000 jobs this year and 34,000 the following year. "It's a double whammy," he said. **MATT CHABAN**

LA PLANNER NAMED CAL POLY ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN DEAN

Woo Hoo!

On July 30, former LA city councilman and current LA city planning commissioner Michael Woo began his job as dean of Cal Poly Pomona's College of Environmental Design. The college combines the school's departments of architecture, art, landscape architecture, and urban and regional planning.

Woo comes to the post with more public service experience than virtually any similar dean in the country. "My experience gives me a very realistic sense of what's going

on in the real world," Woo told AN, adding that he hopes to serve as a link between the public and private sectors and the academic realm. "I want to maximize my involvement with the community, not minimize it."

Woo has been involved in a number of the most high-profile urban policy initiatives in Los Angeles, a big reason he was selected as dean, said Provost Marten denBoer. He also gained academic experience as an adjunct professor at the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development.

While on the city planning commission, Woo helped launch a moratorium on new billboards and opened a review of the health effects of polluted air in residential developments near freeways. He also helped draft the city's "Do Real Planning" principles, adopted

in 2006. He served on the LA city council from 1985 to 1993. After leaving that post, he ran for mayor (he placed second). While in office, he was involved in the Hollywood Redevelopment Plan and helped plot the route of the MetroRail Red Line.

Woo also works as a consultant to ClimatePlan, a coalition of nonprofit advocacy groups, where he advises on land use changes in California to fight climate change. And he is chairman of Smart Growth America, a national coalition that supports historic preservation, the environment, open space preservation, and neighborhood revitalization.

Woo said it is too early to discuss changes in curriculum, but expressed keen interest in promoting interaction among the college's several disciplines. The college is only one of

three in the state that combines architecture, landscape architecture, and planning (the other two are UC Berkeley and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo), maximizing the capacity for interaction and experimentation. He also said that he hopes to promote the work of the school's little-known John T. Lyle Center for Regenerative Studies, which explores strategies like low-energy architecture, sustainable community redevelopment, biofuels, water treatment, and organic agriculture.

Woo takes up his post at a difficult time. Faculty will be forced to take furloughs twice a month, and he said that CSU may cut its overall budget by about 20 percent. "It won't be easy introducing myself as the bearer of bad news," he said. **SAM LUBELL**

PACKING UP CAMP

Now that **Donald Fisher's** CAMP project in San Francisco is officially dead, talk is swirling about where the Gap founder's art collection will go. The whispers have focused on one obvious suspect: SFMOMA, which has already begun planning a 100,000-square-foot expansion that could get even bigger. One rumor has it that the museum is talking to the city about acquiring an adjoining fire station and building a new one elsewhere in return, in order to offer the Fishers their own digs. SFMOMA director **Neal Benezra** coyly parried questions with the comment: "We welcome the opportunity to partner with the Fishers to find a home for their collection as part of an expanded SFMOMA campus."

PEARLS BEFORE SCI-ARC

Few talking heads can dent an architectural ego like critic, curator, and professor **Jeff Kipnis**, who moderated a chat at SCI-Arc on July 29 with **Eric Owen Moss** and **Thom Mayne** about Moss' new installation at the school. Among Kipnis' gems, he accused Moss of using SCI-Arc to promote his own career, praised Moss' garrulousness with the bon mot that he got paid by the hour for such events, and marveled at Moss' and Mayne's ability to argue with themselves—not among themselves, mind you, but each with his own self! Days later SCI-Arc hosted another panel, this time with Moss, Mayne, **Hitoshi Abe**, **Peter Cook**, **Wolf Prix**, and **Peter Noever**, among others. The event had the makings of a navel-gazing nightmare, but Eavesdrop promptly fell asleep and can't recall a thing. Honest.

RAISE HIGH THE WINDOW WALLS

Everyone adores the Center for Architecture in New York, the storefront space run by the AIA New York chapter that draws more activity than any other such facility. Word has it that AIA Los Angeles is among those green with envy, which could mean a departure from its eighth-floor digs in Mid-Wilshire. The group is said to have hired a real estate consultant to scout locations nearer to Museum Mile. Will Wright, head of legislative affairs at AIA/LA, was semi-mum on the matter: "We have long-range plans to evaluate the opportunity to evolve into an Architecture Center." Roger that, Will. Easy does it, we always say.

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BRIT-HEAVY TEAM BOOTED FROM
GSA'S UN PLAZA PROJECTFOSTER
FALLOUT

It seemed to counteract the spirit of the Obama Administration's stimulus bill when one of the largest Recovery Act projects to date in San Francisco—the \$121 million renovation of 50 UN Plaza for the General Services Administration (GSA)—was handed to the team of Berkeley's ELS and London's Foster + Partners.

But after news of the decision circulated last month, along with criticism from competing California firms rankled by the presence of the marquee British architect, the GSA reversed course. Foster was given the boot, and on August 7 the agency awarded a \$7.9 million contract to San Francisco-based Architectural Resources Group with HKS, one of the four teams on the original shortlist.

In July, the GSA had confirmed it was hammering out financial details for work on the historic federal building in the Civic Center area. The contract was set to go to ELS, which had been the historic architect for the restoration of Oakland's Fox Theater and was the primary architect on the UN Plaza proposal, with Foster as the partner. The other finalists on the shortlist were Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and the team of Hornberger + Worstell with William McDonough.

When the original decision came to light, Martin Bovill, vice president of development at Hornberger + Worstell, whose projects include the rejuvenation of Ghirardelli Square, said what others in San Francisco were thinking: "You'd think that it would make sense to keep the money here rather than send it overseas. It's not like you're in Timbuktu. You have

very well-qualified firms in the city with experience in San Francisco historic preservation."

The GSA, which manages all federal buildings aside from military property, was given \$5.55 billion in the stimulus package to upgrade federal office buildings, courthouses, and ports. Originally, the agency defended its decision by pointing to the Brooks Act, a federal law that states that the government must select architecture firms based on qualifications, not price. The Recovery Act does not state that design and construction work must go to American firms, only that building materials such as steel must be produced in the states. At the time, a GSA spokesperson also emphasized that the contract was still being negotiated. While the two parties may have failed to reach an agreement, it's hard not to suspect that political pressure was a factor.

The agency's flip-flop is the latest twist for the six-story, 350,000-square-foot, Beaux Arts UN Plaza building, designed in 1936 by Arthur Brown Jr., who was also the architect of San Francisco's City Hall. The structure was shuttered after the new Morphosis-designed Federal Building opened in 2007. The GSA's intent is to modernize the utilities, put in new bathrooms, and open up the interior workspaces, while leaving the historic facade, stairwells, and corridors in place.

The winning team includes 18 additional local consulting engineers and building specialists. Design work is expected to begin this month, with completion scheduled for September 2010. **LYDIA LEE**



50 UN Plaza.

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> RN74

Millennium Tower, 301 Mission Street
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COURTESY AVROKO

In the midst of Depression 2.0, you'd think that no restaurant owner would open a splashy new wine bar, let alone at the base of a slick new condominium tower. Not so. Restaurateur and chef Michael Mina, who owns and operates 14 restaurants in Washington, D.C., Las Vegas, and Los Angeles, has unveiled his latest restaurant in his hometown of San Francisco. RN74, named after a road that snakes through France's Burgundy region, opened this spring and has quickly become one of the city's top hangouts for winemakers and wine enthusiasts. At the base of the 60-story Millennium Tower in San Francisco's SoMa district, the 30-seat bar is armed with a 7,000-bottle list and a chef from French Laundry. AvroKO, the design firm that designed Per Se in New York, modeled the 4,700-square-foot establishment after a European train station, outfitting it with leather banquettes, industrial lighting, exposed walls and columns, train tickets-turned-napkin holders, and the coup de grâce: an electronic train board advertising discounted wine bottles. **KRISTINA SHEVORY**

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Ravinia Festival Food Service Building
Lohan Anderson
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER AUGUST 19, 2009



Normally, San Jose is not a place that fosters architectural quality. But when planning began for its Norman Y. Mineta Airport (SJC), city leaders sensed an opportunity for extraordinary design. Ralph Tonseth, then-director of aviation, thought this would benefit the whole city, not just airlines and passen-

gers. He wanted, he said, a design so striking that people would argue about it in bars.

While San Jose is America's tenth-largest city, its airport ranks only 41st in passenger count. And in spite of being Silicon Valley's airfield, SJC has a *Casablanca* quaintness, where some flights are boarded by leaving

the terminal building, strolling on the tarmac, and climbing a portable stair to the plane door.

But that's changing rapidly under a modernization program that will double the facility's square footage, rationalize an ad-hoc functional and circulation pattern, and present a far more

polished face to the world. When completed next year, this \$1.3 billion project will appear resolved and fluid, belying an administratively complex gestation and challenging fast-track implementation. Gensler's San Francisco office and local firm Steinberg Architects were masterplan architects and designers of the Terminal B concourse, whose first section opened on July 15. The terminal itself is being carried out by Fentress Architects and Hensel Phelps construction. That part of the project, which includes an immense 3,350-space garage, will open next year.

The current Terminal B Concourse is the central 1,600-foot portion of a 3,500-foot linear scheme that could eventually extend more than a mile if the demand warrants. This linearity, rare in airports of this scale, reflects a tight site hemmed in by a city boundary on one side and the Guadalupe River on the other. It also suggested a design approach: a long, rounded extrusion, with an elegant curvilinear exterior symbolizing a communications cable whose outer layers have been irregularly sliced

and partly peeled away. Inside, the extrusion is even more consistent. The 90-foot-wide concourse is a dramatic hall of light formed by a convex east wall, a clerestory, a convex glass roof/ceiling, an outwardly slanting interior colonnade, and sweeping window walls with dramatic views of the airfield to the west.

In recent years, traffic has been declining, but the expansion is still needed and welcome. Even before the Transportation Security Administration's colonization of public space for its screening processes, SJC was cramped and inefficient. And after 9/11, security lines often spilled out of the main hall. The current modernizations will decrease the number of flight gates until traffic growth triggers a final expansion, while increasing floor space. Terminal A is gaining long-needed space for concessions, circulation, screening, baggage handling, and curbside check-in, and naturally the Terminal B components are being built to comfortable space standards.

Technical advances will allow shared use of airline gates and counters, creating



Left: Terminal B's linear design allows for easy future expansion. Above: The airport will create a new icon for San Jose.

efficiencies and flexibility. The new construction is LEED-certified, and features generous daylighting, integral solar shading, and a low-speed, high-volume ventilation system. An ambitious tech-themed public art program will be in place at project completion next year.

When the project was initiated, then-mayor Ron Gonzalez had clear ambitions for the airport, seeking an iconic building that conferred a sense of place and arrival that would represent San Jose the way that the Sydney Opera House embodied its city. Since then, budget deficits have led the city to trade vision for caution, but the project still stands as a testament to more aspiring, budget-rich days.

JOHN PASTIER



Madame Tussauds Hollywood Attraction

Using Building Information Modeling technology to enhance project controls, the recently completed Madame Tussauds is a 40,000 sf three-story structural steel building featuring a museum attraction and two subterranean levels of parking for 94 cars. The stunning exterior wall design incorporates architectural concrete, zinc panels, curtain-wall glazing and curved masonry shear walls.

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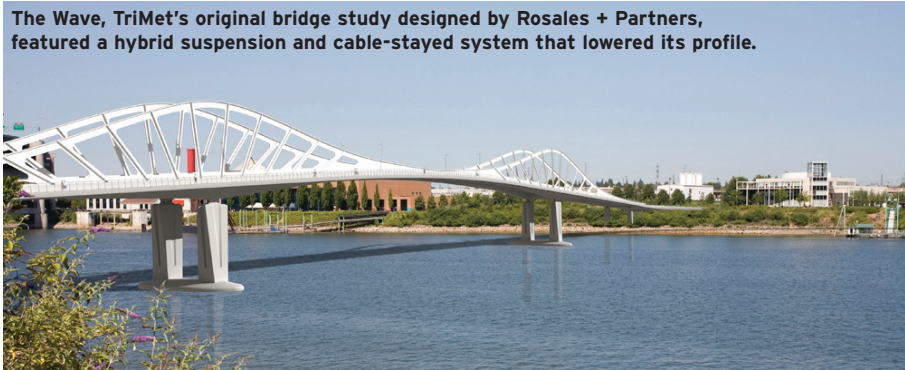
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The Wave, TriMet's original bridge study designed by Rosales + Partners, featured a hybrid suspension and cable-stayed system that lowered its profile.



COURTESY ROSALES + PARTNERS

A BRIDGE NOT FAR ENOUGH

continued from front page
city center to northern Clackamas County, the city has invested in the exploration of concepts that could herald another engineering masterpiece. What has erupted since is a debate over the final design for the 780-foot span.

Led by the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet), the proposed bridge will carry light rail, buses, pedestrians, bicyclists, and possibly a streetcar while providing green zones at each end. The initial concept, put forth during the research phase, was designed by bridge architects Rosales + Partners. Entitled "The Wave," the proposal features a hybrid structure comprising both suspension and cable-stayed systems that create an undulating profile. This system, said Rosales, softens

the angular geometry of a typical cable-stayed bridge by decreasing the height of its towers. It also pays tribute to one of Portland's most stunning spans, the St. Johns Bridge, he added.

But on May 28, the Willamette River Bridge Advisory Committee (WRBAC) deemed the Wave too costly. The committee voted instead for a cable-stayed bridge designed by Donald MacDonald Architects (DMA) of San Francisco that is estimated to cost \$110 million. The Wave had an estimated cost of \$134 million.

The choice sparked public discussion about the city's dismissal of aesthetic grandeur in favor of the bottom line. In a letter to TriMet and DMA dated June 10, the WRBAC stated, "The committee would like to acknowledge that a few of its members continue to support the original hybrid

version." Further debate was triggered by the newspaper story "Soaring or boring?" in *The Oregonian* on June 16.

Meanwhile DMA has been working to better satisfy design expectations, despite the focus on budget. On July 24, the firm presented design options for a refined cable-stayed bridge that has slightly inward-canting towers, cantilevered bike and pedestrian paths, and an emphasis on a lightness of structure. Further design development is expected to continue well into next year.

For now, TriMet project director Robert Barnard has defended the transit department's decision by pointing out that Portland's identity can best be found in "an understated aesthetic." "Our goal is to deliver a bridge that embodies the Portland aesthetic and is functional and affordable," he said.

MARTINA DOLEJSOVA



COURTESY MDA JOHNSON FAVARO

UNVEILED

WEST HOLLYWOOD LIBRARY

In June, the City of West Hollywood broke ground on a new library designed by MDA Johnson Favaro. The start follows a year-long hiatus that went into effect when construction costs rose sharply during the building boom. The city commissioned both a new building and masterplan for the adjacent West Hollywood

Park, a project on the boards since 2004.

Scheduled to open in 2012, the \$50 million, three-story construction will include 43,000 square feet of floor area, 32,000 square feet of which are slated for library use. The remainder of the building will house a large event space, a sidewalk cafe, and a public meeting room for community gatherings and lectures.

The masterplan will attempt to remedy the park's lack of green space. Plans

from the 1950s and '60s made room for only one acre of park on the 8-acre site. The new plan will create 5.5 acres of green space, condensing and clustering new facilities at the south end of the park. Later phases of the masterplan will bring a recreational facility with a pool and a gym. As each new building is completed, an old one will be taken down.

To highlight the new library's significance as one of West Hollywood's few civic buildings, the designers chose to invoke the Villa Savoye. The design's square volume and white, smooth facade of cured limestone plaster may evoke Le Corbusier's masterpiece, but undulations in the lustrous surface will imbue it with lightness and movement, making it tranquil rather than monolithic. "It's as if it were floating over the park," said principal Jim Favaro.

VICTORIA MONJO

Architect: MDA Johnson Favaro
Location: West Hollywood Park on San Vicente Boulevard
Construction: 2012

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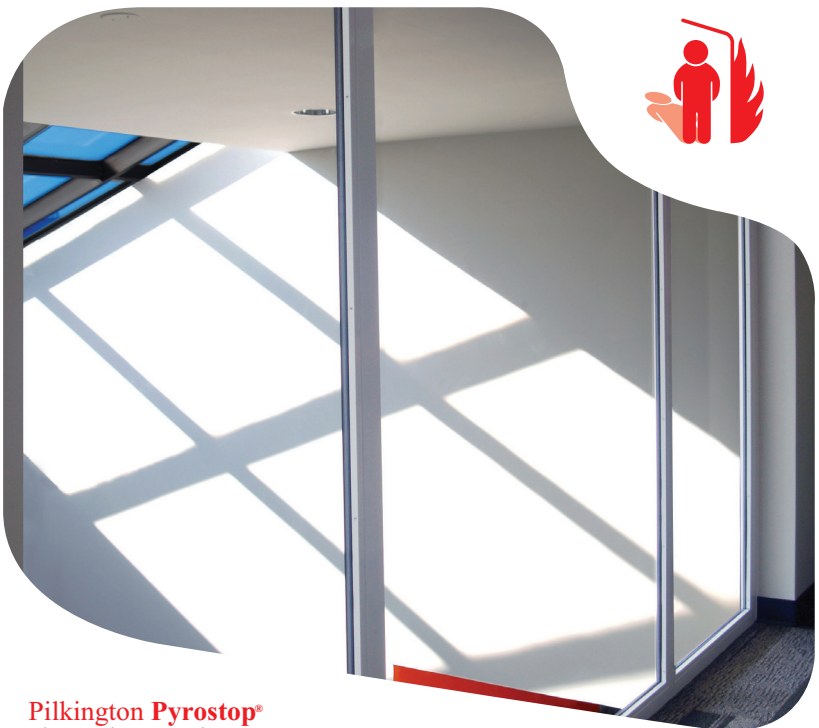
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**DESPITE PRESERVATIONIST OUTCRY, SALE OF WRIGHT HOUSE
COULD BE ITS ONLY SALVATION**



COURTESY EHF

ENNIS ANYONE?

In June, the Ennis House Foundation (EHF), owners of the famed Frank Lloyd Wright-designed mansion in LA's Los Feliz neighborhood, announced that it was putting the iconic structure on the market for \$15 million. The EHF stated it could not attract sufficient philanthropy to support the house's ongoing restoration needs. The organization found that the only hope of saving the treasure from total ruin was to put it on the private market and hope for a responsible buyer.

The announcement sent a ripple of distress through the preservation community. Some complained about relinquishing the house to the private realm, while others clamored about the waste of public funds that have already gone into the building's repair: In 2005, The EHF, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), and the LA Conservancy helped fund a \$6.5 million restoration of the house after it had suffered earthquake and water damage.

One particularly outspoken poster on the website Lottaliving.com put it this way: "Frankly, I'm disgusted by the sale of this property from the public sector back to the private sector. We are not just talking a typical historic building here. Millions of dollars of public funds went into the repair of this property, and it was never mentioned that the building could go back to a private owner. Like many, I donated money...and I certainly would have never done that had I known the property would be closed again to the public, which barely had time to visit the property

during the short time it was open between repair campaigns."

Ron Scherubel, executive director of the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy (WBC) acknowledged the blogger's concerns, but also pointed out that the house has never been open as a public museum. The EHF has come under pressure in the past from neighbors threatening lawsuits to stop visitors and buses crowding their small, winding street. In addition, the neighborhood is not currently zoned to contain a private museum.

Even if these obstacles were removed, however, the Ennis House would not be in the clear. "The financial models that work with house museums, even the best of them, would never bring in enough revenue to sustain the foundation," said Anthea Hartig, director of the West Coast Regional Office of the NTHP and a board member of the EHF. She added that the house still requires at least \$6 million more for stabilization, reconstruction, and interior work.

Hartig insists that the work that the NTHP did will not go to waste, and that historic agencies will ensure that it stays in good hands. "The trust is very proud and pleased to be part of the great work that was done," Hartig said, adding that without the work the house would now have probably deteriorated beyond repair.

Jim DeMeo, president of the EHF, said that a preservation easement for the house will likely require any new owner to open the house to "some level of public access" at least a few times a year. The easement would

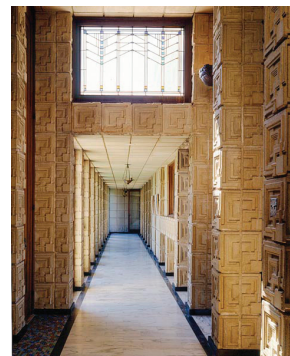
also protect the house from any changes to the exterior or interior. The EHF board also has the right to vet potential owners.

Hartig said that the real estate agents Hilton & Hyland and Dilbeck, LA affiliates of Christie's Great Estates, would cooperate in finding a well-suited, respectful owner. And Scherubel pointed out that in general, people who buy Wright houses do so because they like architecture and are interested in protecting it.

Meanwhile, according to DeMeo, the house has attracted significant interest. Noting that the foundation has had "a number of showings" of the house, he added that "there are parties that are seriously considering this property, both nationally and internationally." While he could not name any names, he did say that none were from public institutions.

DeMeo said that if the Ennis House were to be sold, the proceeds would likely go toward paying off its mortgage. **SL**

Above: The Ennis was the largest of Wright's four concrete-block houses. Below: The 16-inch modular blocks flow from exterior to interior.



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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER AUGUST 19, 2009

CRIT> MADAME TUSSAUDS HOLLYWOOD



DORIT THIES

RoTo Architects and the John Ash Group have broken new ground in Hollywood. The courtyard building they have just completed on a corner site adjoining the Chinese Theater may be the first piece of architecture on Hollywood Boulevard to look forward as well as back. RoTo principal Michael Rotondi grew up in LA and remembers coming here as a kid to catch a movie and hang out with friends. He wanted to recreate the feeling of sociability and spectacle he enjoyed then by designing a building that was contemporary in expression but deeply rooted

in tradition and place.

Happily, the owners of the site shared his vision. Larry Worchell and Steve Ullman have long had a stake in Hollywood and wanted to do the right thing. They asked RoTo to give them a signature building that would occupy only half the maximum allowable volume. In contrast to the overwhelming bulk and blank street facades of the Hollywood and Highland mall to the east, the new building is modestly scaled, and its two three-story wings frame a sizeable plaza. This public space picks up on the tradition of the Chinese and Egyptian

theaters, set back behind forecourts that would serve as gathering places before a show or to accommodate a crowd for a gala premiere.

The owners stayed the course for ten years as the first anchor tenant (the now-bankrupt Frederick's of Hollywood) dropped out, and Madame Tussauds took the principal space. One can debate whether waxworks are a classier attraction than sexy lingerie, but the eponymous madame established herself in London 220 years ago, and celebrity replicas have enduring appeal,

Madame Tussauds will only occupy half of the allowable square footage, creating room for a public plaza reminiscent of the nearby Chinese and Egyptian theaters.

particularly in a surreal place like Hollywood. Movie stars shopped and dined on Hollywood Boulevard during its brief hey-day; today's tourists must make do with look-alikes.

The architects had to negotiate a jungle of regulations—from the gauge of handrails to street openings—while maintaining the integrity of their design. Hollywood Heritage (a bunch of nostalgia buffs who seek to preserve the past and favor historical pastiches) tried to derail the project, as they had with Hodgetts + Fung's recreation of the decrepit Hollywood Bowl. Miraculously, most essentials of the design remained unchanged, though a pedestrian arcade linking front and back was sacrificed to provide more enclosed space.

Frederick's had wanted to put its wares on view. Tussauds preferred solid walls to achieve a controlled environment, though visitors enter through roll-up glass doors, and a lofty retail space to the east is fully glazed. The solid walls are clad in gray-brown zinc scales with

projecting fins to create a play of shadows, and a folded screen of perforated metal spans the height difference between the two wings, tying the composition together. The main wing is tapered in plan, and clad in bowed walls of dark brick on the Orange Avenue frontage. Rotondi's invention and Ash's expertise in preservation fused to create a subtly modeled structure that is neutral yet has presence.

"This building is about movement," said Rotondi, and he has provided visitors with exciting new vistas. A staircase runs up the east side and the rear wall to an overlook, and a catwalk links a rooftop party space in back to a terrace looking over the boulevard. From both these vantage points, the historic skyline of Hollywood snaps into focus, from the fanciful copper piers of the Chinese Theater to the art deco tower of the old Security Pacific Bank, the pylon atop El Capitan, and the richly modeled facade of the Hollywood Roosevelt directly across the street. From this public aerie the tawdry reality of the sidewalk and the lurid signage of Tussauds disappear and the legend of Hollywood is renewed.

MICHAEL WEBB

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ON HIGHER GROUND continued from front page anchored to the sea floor that would prevent extreme tides through the principles of buoyancy and tension. Meanwhile, local firm Kuth Ranieri conceived a more dramatic solution: Its self-sustaining “Folding Water” is a ventilated levee that would create a waterfall in the bay, mechanically regulating rising sea levels on one side while maintaining delta and bay waters on the other. The husband-and-wife team is seeking funding to continue its research. “Infrastructure has an opportunity to belong to the landscape in a new way,” said Elizabeth Ranieri. “If we look at our landscape as a text that pre-exists, we can write in the margins and extend the discussion.”

The discussion, however, begins with public awareness. Derek James Hoeferlin and Ian Caine of Washington University underline this fact in their “100 Year Plan,” which advocates for a more localized policy to solve the greater water crisis. The duo is joined in the awareness campaign by Berkeley’s Thom Faulders, whose esoteric “RAYdike”—a temporary laser light barrier surrounding San Francisco—evokes a worst-case scenario. The barrier rises about 30 feet above the water and runs the course of the SF Bay shoreline, representing what an actual earthen dike might look like in the bay. According to Faulders, an earthen dike is a possible solution, no matter how insensitive to bay life it might be. RAYdike would serve as “a wake-up call for everyone to recognize the gravity of the situation in

an artful way.”

As a competition, Rising Tides, too, was a wake-up call. The jury almost immediately concluded that no single idea can solve the problem of sea-level rise. “The bay itself is so complex it will require a whole toolkit of solutions,” said David Meckel, director of research and planning at California College of the Arts. He is confident that the entries will jump-start the necessary dialogue, and expects the engineering concepts of SOM and Kuth Ranieri to advance further. Though no announcements have been made by BCDC, Meckel conjectures that one or both of these winners may receive grants to continue their research. Ranieri, who is already assembling her team of scientists, engineers, and architects, is hopeful: “I see great potential in a ventilated levee that can still maintain the natural ecology,” she said. “If we can really understand how the estuary behaves, [Folding Water] has potential beyond the Bay Area—the application could work anywhere.”

In the meantime, five of the six winning teams will present their concepts at an event hosted by the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) on August 18. On September 22, BCDC’s Brad McCrea will lead a walking tour of the Bay shoreline and discuss the need to adapt waterfronts in the face of rising tides around the world. The competition winners and honorable mentions are on view at www.risingtidescompetition.com.

CHLOÉ HARRIS

AT DEADLINE

BROAD HITS THE ROAD

Eli Broad’s effort to build a new museum on the corner of Wilshire and Santa Monica boulevards in Beverly Hills is looking all but kaput. Sources close to the project have told *AN* that Broad is looking elsewhere, while Broad—asked to submit specific plans to the Beverly Hills Planning Division for an upcoming EIR—has not communicated with the department since late April.

BILLBOARDS AWAY

On August 7, the Los Angeles city council approved a ban on new digital billboards and supergraphic signs. The unanimous vote came amid a legal challenge by an advertising company that sought to overturn a temporary moratorium on new signs, enacted while council members considered a package of new billboard regulations. A federal court was set to rule on that case late this month.

MOSS ROLLED IN HOLLYWOOD

Citing concerns over size, scale, and design, West Hollywood planners have recommended that the city planning commission deny a proposed Eric Owen Moss-designed hotel and mixed-use complex for the corner of Sunset and Doheny, at 9040 Sunset Boulevard. The 187,000-square-foot project, featuring Moss’ off-kilter floorplates and hard-edged forms, would include retail and residential space along the Sunset Strip, plus an 11-story hotel sporting a glazed curtain wall, set with floating steel panels.

WATTAGE FOR WATTS TOWERS?

The Watts Towers, the 100-foot-tall, triple-spired steel skeleton and folk art masterwork created by Simon Rodia, needs an estimated \$5 million to be restored to prime condition. LA’s cultural affairs and cultural heritage officials have decided to push for a major philanthropic effort. They plan to ask the mayor to help recruit donors and activists for a nonprofit support group like those that help fund the Los Angeles Zoo and Griffith Park Observatory.

PRESIDENTIAL TYPES

The AIA Los Angeles chapter announced the winners of its 2009 Presidential awards, which will be handed out this fall. Among the honorees, Michael Rotondi won the Gold Medal, Daly Genik won firm of the year, and the LAPD Headquarters team—whose many members included AECOM Design, Roth + Sheppard Architects, Studio O.10, and John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects—won building team of the year.

TEACHING GREEN

How best to promote green building? Education. The University of California’s Irvine Extension announced several new courses focusing on sustainability. This fall, a new program—Specialized Studies in Sustainable Buildings: Renewable Energy Management—will be introduced, and three new elective courses under the Certificate Program in Sustainability Leadership will be offered.





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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER AUGUST 19, 2009

HOUSE OF THE ISSUE > PATH ARCHITECTS



The design of the Butler House was inspired by the rustic architecture of an alpine cabin.

Much of inner southeast Portland is a flat grid of nondescript ranch houses and 1940s cottages. Into this innocuous terrain the owners of the Butler House inserted a home reminiscent of a mountain cabin. "They wanted it to feel like they were in the landscape and connected to the beyond," said Corey Martin, who, along with partners Ben Kaiser and Scott Mannhard, runs local firm PATH Architects.

To fulfill this directive in the somewhat incongruous surroundings of the City of Roses, the architects manipulated spaces and materials to blur the boundaries between the house and the overall sylvan environment.

They set the home back from the street, forcing perspective up to the forested slopes of nearby hills. They also took inspiration from rustic life in finding a shape for the residence: "The box is inspired by the beauty of a stack of uncut lumber," said Martin.

Resting on a 44-foot-wide by 100-foot-deep site, the 2,000-square-foot house is narrow and tall. The architects clad the two upper floors in custom channel oak siding, whose long, log-cabin-like, horizontal lines provide a counterbalance to the overall verticality. In addition, a media room that cantilevers above the driveway gives relief from the otherwise tightly contained

rectangular volume. And a louver shading system on the sides of the house, designed for passive

cooling and heating, keeps the house from resembling a tower.

The architects designed a cedar fence that rings the property line, and used the same material in the interior entry wall. "We were literally blurring inside and out," Martin said. The fence also acts as the back framing wall of two outbuildings that house an exercise room, sauna, and bicycle storage. When the dining room's full-length glass doors are opened, the outbuildings, living area, and courtyard become one huge room whose walls are the fence.

Careful placement of windows also connects the house to its surroundings. All windows are floor-to-ceiling (with the exception of the master bedroom, for privacy), and the glass is left uncluttered by coverings or shades. The architects chose long, horizontal and vertical windows. "You don't just look through them, as with a standard square window, but you look up and down and left and right,"

explained Martin. Most of the windows are oriented to frame the sky, courtyard, and fence, illuminating glimpses of trees and clouds rather than the shingled roof next door.

The architects left the interior open, only enclosing the two bedrooms and bathrooms. In lieu of walls and doors, the space is anchored around the columnar form of a fireplace running the full height of the house, which was inspired by the massive basalt cliffs that form the nearby Columbia River Gorge. The informally bounded rooms spiral up and around the chimney, their double-height ceilings creating a generous, airy sensation. This helical procession ends at a rooftop deck. Set at the city's code limit of 30 feet and planted with low-maintenance sedum, this sky garden puts the finishing touch on the Butler House's mountain cabin metaphor.

AMARA HOLSTEIN



TY MILFORD

Pierre Koenig's Case Study House #21.



COURTESY WRIGHT

JULIUS SHULMAN, 1910-2009 continued from front page perspective," said Pierluigi Serraino, author of *Modernism Rediscovered* (Taschen), a three-volume set containing many of Shulman's most iconic pictures. "He made modernism more benevolent to the public eye. He understood the media and consumerism, and building images of yourself and of others."

Working in Los Angeles, Palm Springs, and across the country, his list of clients grew into a roster of the most famous modernist architects ever to work in the United States. Among them were Richard Neutra, John Lautner, Pierre Koenig, Frank Lloyd Wright, Charles Eames, Gregory Ain, Albert Frey, Bruce Goff, Raphael Soriano, and Rudolph Schindler, to name but a few. He started working with many before they became renowned, and his

eye for talent eventually made him one of the great architectural tastemakers of the 20th century.

Shulman also relished capturing the work of lesser-known architects, documenting thousands of somewhat anonymous spaces with the same exacting eye. His voluminous corporate work included shots of shopping centers, construction sites, department stores, factories, schools, furniture showrooms, and stadia. The Getty Research Institute's Julius Shulman Photography Archive, which stretches from the 1930s to 1997, contains over 260,000 negatives, prints, transparencies, and related printed matter.

His passion for architecture extended to how it shaped our lives. "We're involved in architecture from birth to death. You're born in a hospital, most likely designed by an architect. But then when you die—a mortuary, designed by an architect," he said in an interview for the recent documentary *Visual Acoustics: The Modernism of Julius Shulman*.

Anne Blecksmith, who curates Shulman's archive at the Getty, spoke about the photographer's intense, intimate—even spiritual—"connection to space." "His images gave you an understanding of a space through visual osmosis. You start seeing beyond the photograph," she said. She also noted his love of exploring and documenting new architecture, like a visual anthropologist. "Sometimes the

documentation is so extensive you wonder if they needed to kick him out."

Serraino said he was astounded at Shulman's attention to detail. "The placement of a napkin, of a cherry, of a subliminal object was so phenomenally calculated in a matter of seconds," he said. "He could tell you so many things with his pictures—concurrent processes were happening. He was thinking about composition and sightline and the relationships of objects to one another and to light and shadows."

He understood how to manufacture impact, too. The famous shot of dainty girls in cocktail dresses cornered in Koenig's glass-walled Case Study House #22, perched over the Hollywood Hills, was no accident. "He knew how to find the eye-stopper," Serraino continued. "He believed that we were flooded with images, so it was ever more challenging to get someone to stop what they were doing to look at a photograph."

Shulman's photographs shaped our perception of a historical moment of optimism and progressive ideas. "It was like a portrait of an environment," Blecksmith said. "Sontag said a photo is like a slice of time. I think he really sensed that. He took a 35mm sensibility to the large format, and created incredible moments."

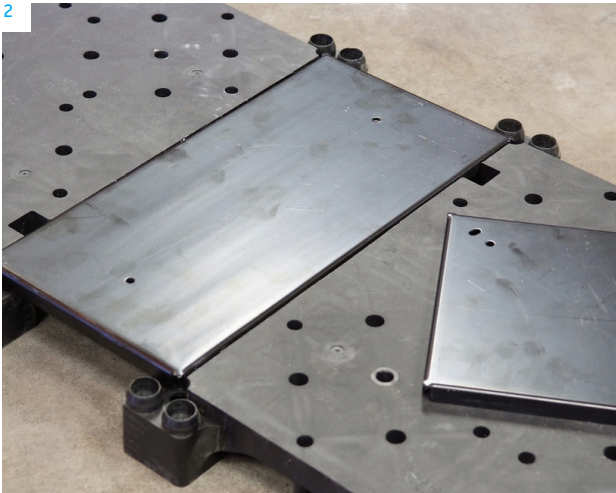
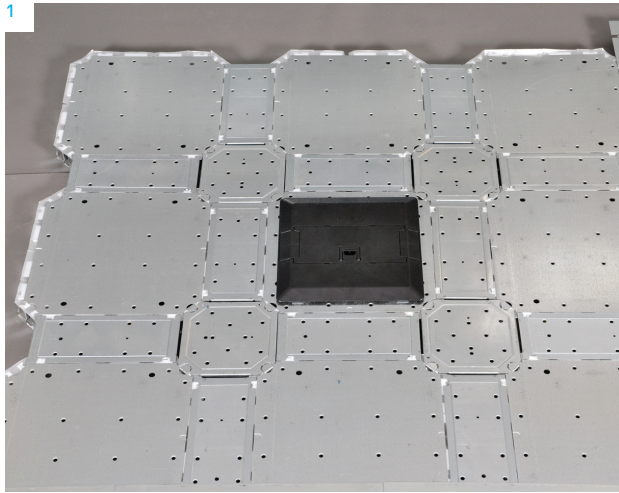
He never lost a sense of esprit in the moment, charming visitors at his house in

Laurel Canyon right up to last year. He would answer his own phone, which was listed in the phone book, and he put a Porsche emblem on his walker, joking about taking the sports car out for a spin. His humor, his generosity, his ego, and his (legendary) stubbornness not only informed his pictures but made him one of the most unforgettable and sought-out characters in LA, as well as one of the town's great social connectors.

As an avid environmentalist, Shulman spent years fighting sprawl, insensitive urban renewal, and the dominance of developer-driven architecture. He focused on photographic education later in life, supporting the foundation of the Julius Shulman Institute at Woodbury University, an archive and education center. Mostly, he enjoyed living: camping and exploring Los Angeles. "This was his city," his daughter said. "It was very important to him what was happening and what wasn't happening. All the clutter and sprawl. It pained him to see what his city was becoming and he fought against it all the time."

As a chronicler of an architectural era of greatness, few could match Shulman's keen eye, and even fewer will ever match his sheer joy in observation and life. Asked what his legacy would be years from now, McKee said she was sure of one thing: "They'll know about him, that's for sure."

SL



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SOURCES: THE MARK REPORT, LA AND SF DEPARTMENTS OF PLANNING, LA DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY

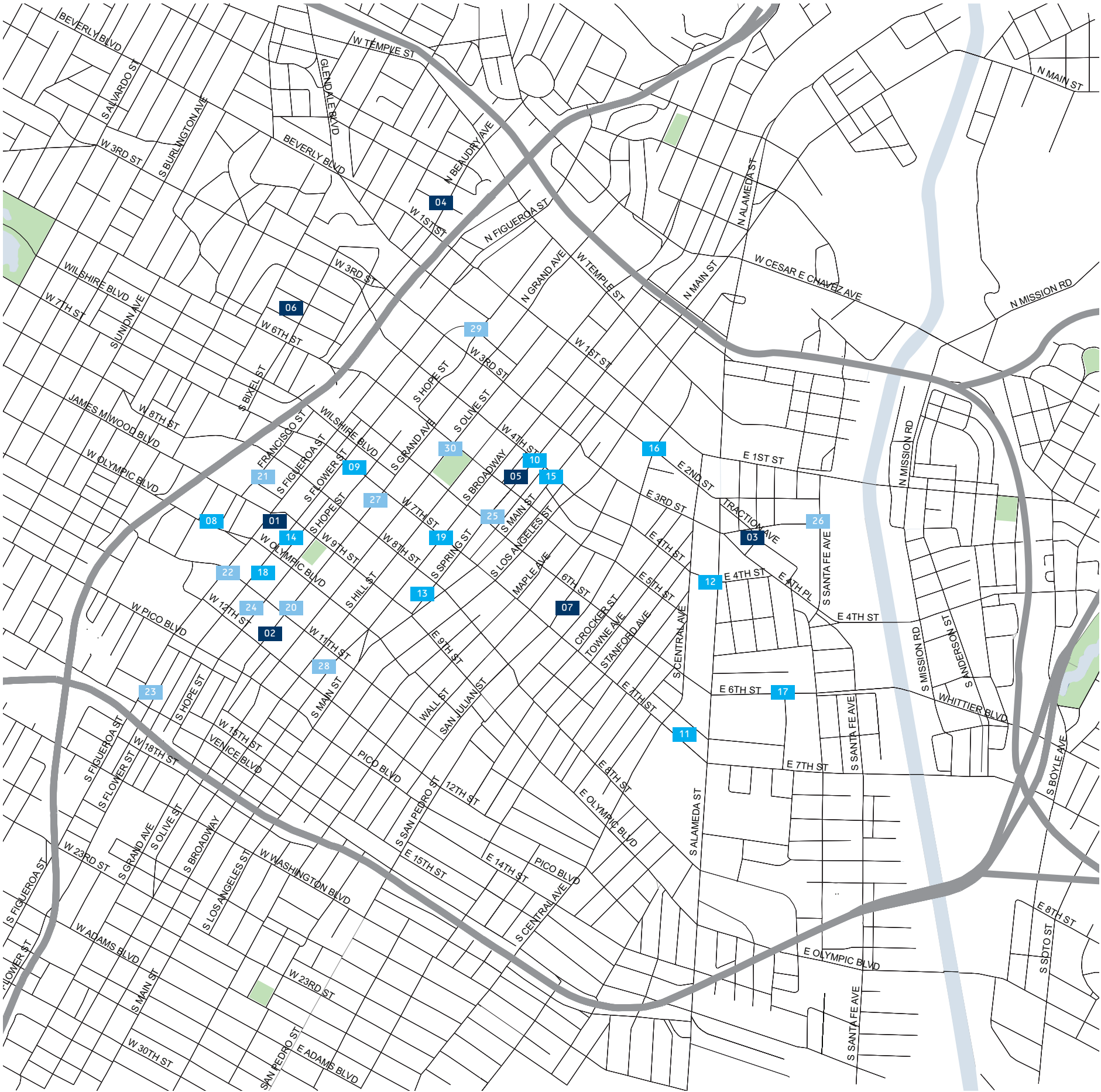
Site Lines: Mapping the downturn—and the bright spots—in Los Angeles and San Francisco

COMPLETED

- 1 Concerto, 900 South Figueroa St.
Developer: Sonny Astani
Architect: DeStefano + Partners
- 2 Evo, 1155 South Grand Ave.
Developer: The South Group
Architect: GBD Architects & TVA Architects
- 3 Mura, 629 Traction Ave.
Developer: Pulte Homes
Architect: Togawa Smith Martin Residential
- 4 Canvas L.A., 138 North Beaudry Ave.
Developer: Alliance Residential; Opus West
Architect: Thomas P. Cox Architects
- 5 Rowan Lofts, 460 South Spring St.
Developer: Downtown Properties
Architect: Killefer Flammang Architects & Dodd Mitchell Design
- 6 Bixel at Fifth, 1311 West 5th St.
Developer: Apex Realty
Architect: Alex Instanbullu
- 7 Abbey Apartments, 625 South San Pedro
Developer: Skid Row Housing Trust
Architect: Koning Eizenberg

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- 8 The Ritz-Carlton Residences at L.A. LIVE
Developer: AEG; Ritz-Carlton
Architect: Gensler
- 9 The Roosevelt, 727 West 7th St.
Developer: Millbank Real Estate Services
Architect: Killefer Flammang Architects
- 10 El Dorado Lofts, 416 South Spring St.
Developer: Downtown Properties
Architect: Rockefeller Partners Architects
- 11 New Carver Apartments, 1317 East 7th St.
Developer: Skid Row Housing Trust
Architect: Michael Maltzan
- 12 Alameda & 4th Flats, South Alameda St. & East 4th St.
Developer: Peklar Pilavjian
Architect: Vanos Architects
- 13 National City Bank Building Lofts, 810 South Spring St.
Developer: David Gray
Architect: David Gray Architects
- 14 717 West 9th St.
Developer: Meruelo Maddox Properties
Architect: Mambo Architecture
- 15 The Medallion, South Main St. & East 4th St.
Developer: Saeed Farkhondepour; Morad Neeman
Architect: Milofsky, Michali & Cox
- 16 San Pedro Apartments, South San Pedro St. & East 2nd St.
Developer: The Related Companies
Architect: Thomas P. Cox Architects
- 17 Sixth Street Lofts, 1309-1333 East 6th St.
Developer: Howard Klein
Architect: Tony Bell Architecture
- 18 Metropolitan Lofts, 1050 South Flower St.
Developer: South Broadway
Architect: Johnson Fain
- 19 Broadway Exchange Lofts, West 7th St. & South Broadway
Developer: Broadway Exchange
Architect: Lucas Rios Giordano



APPROVED

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| 20 Glass Tower, 1050 South Grand Ave.
Developer: The Kalantari Group
Architect: DeStefano + Partners | 23 1500 South Figueroa St.
Developer: Sandwa
Architect: Epstein-ISI | 26 One Santa Fe,
South Santa Fe Ave. & East 3 rd St.
Developer: MacGregor Company
Architect: Michael Maltzan | 29 Grand Avenue Project,
236 South Hope St.
Developer: The Related Companies
Architect: Gehry Partners |
| 21 Metropolis, 899 Francisco St.
Developer: LA Metropolis
Architect: Arquitectonica;
Gruen Associates | 24 1133 South Hope St.
Developer: Amacon Group
Architect: Chris Dikeakos Architects | 27 8 th & Grand, 718 South Grand Ave.
Developer: Astani Enterprises
Architect: DeStefano + Partners | 30 Park Fifth, South Olive St. & West 5 th St.
Developer: Africa Israel;
Namco Capital Group;
Houk Development
Architect: KPF |
| 22 Figueroa Central,
West 11 St. & South Figueroa St.
Developer: The Moinian Group
Architect: RTKL | 25 SB Lofts, 548 South Spring St.
Developer: SB Properties
Architect: N/A | 28 Herald Examiner, 1111 South Broadway
Developer: Urban Partners; Hearst
Architect: Morphosis; Brenda Levin | |

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The economic slowdown has sapped revitalization efforts in central Los Angeles and San Francisco, especially in the hard-hit sector of residential development. Already this year, residential construction is off by more than a quarter in LA, according to the city's planning department. Construction financing is still almost impossible to find, several high-profile projects have been shelved, and property values have plunged. But there are signs that the downturn, while devastating, may at last be hitting bottom. While the slump has forced some developers to sell off properties at auction, prices are no longer in free fall. And while few projects are beginning construction, those nearing completion are starting to see buyers and renters come back. For instance, certain buildings were selling just five units per month late last fall, but Alan Mark, president of the Mark Company, a downtown LA developer, said he sold two dozen units in the new condo tower Evo in June.

One possible bright spot in the general gloom of the recession is that downtown districts are becoming more affordable for the middle class. Developers long set on luxury condominiums are now resorting to leasing, and turning to mid-market and affordable projects. And there are even signs that opportunity still exists for new developments: Public funds for adaptive reuse and community redevelopment projects, while in shorter supply because of falling public revenue, are still available in these tough times. In the midst of all this, buyers and renters who previously wouldn't have dreamed of looking for homes downtown are taking advantage of good deals, low interest rates, and the federal government's \$8,000 first-time-homebuyer tax credits.

In our third annual developer's feature, we have mapped out many of the most significant new, under-construction, and approved projects in downtown LA and SF. The picture that has emerged is a reminder that we aren't out of the woods. Most of the big projects dreamed up during the boom times (those labeled "approved," not "under construction") likely won't rise for months, or even years. Retail and commercial development is slow as well, further hampering downtown renewal. But as our survey of new development shows, there is hope for a new kind of future in these two American cities. They may not become the landscapes of unrelieved luxury that many in the real estate world expected, but the building will go on—and in some ways for the better.

SAM LUBELL IS AN'S CALIFORNIA EDITOR.

COMPLETED

- 1 Millennium Tower, 301 Mission St.
Developer: Millennium Partners
Architect: Handel Architects
- 2 The Infinity (Phase II), 160 Folsom St.
Developer: Tishman Speyer
Architect: Heller Manus; Arquitectonica
- 3 829 Folsom St.
Developer: FORMA
Architect: FORMA
- 4 Arnett Watson Apartments, 650 Eddy St.
Developer: TNDC
Architect: HKIT architects
- 5 77 Van Ness
Developer: Van Ness & Fell
Architect: Forum Design
- 6 Argenta, 1 Polk St.
Developer: ANKA
Architect: De Quesada Architects

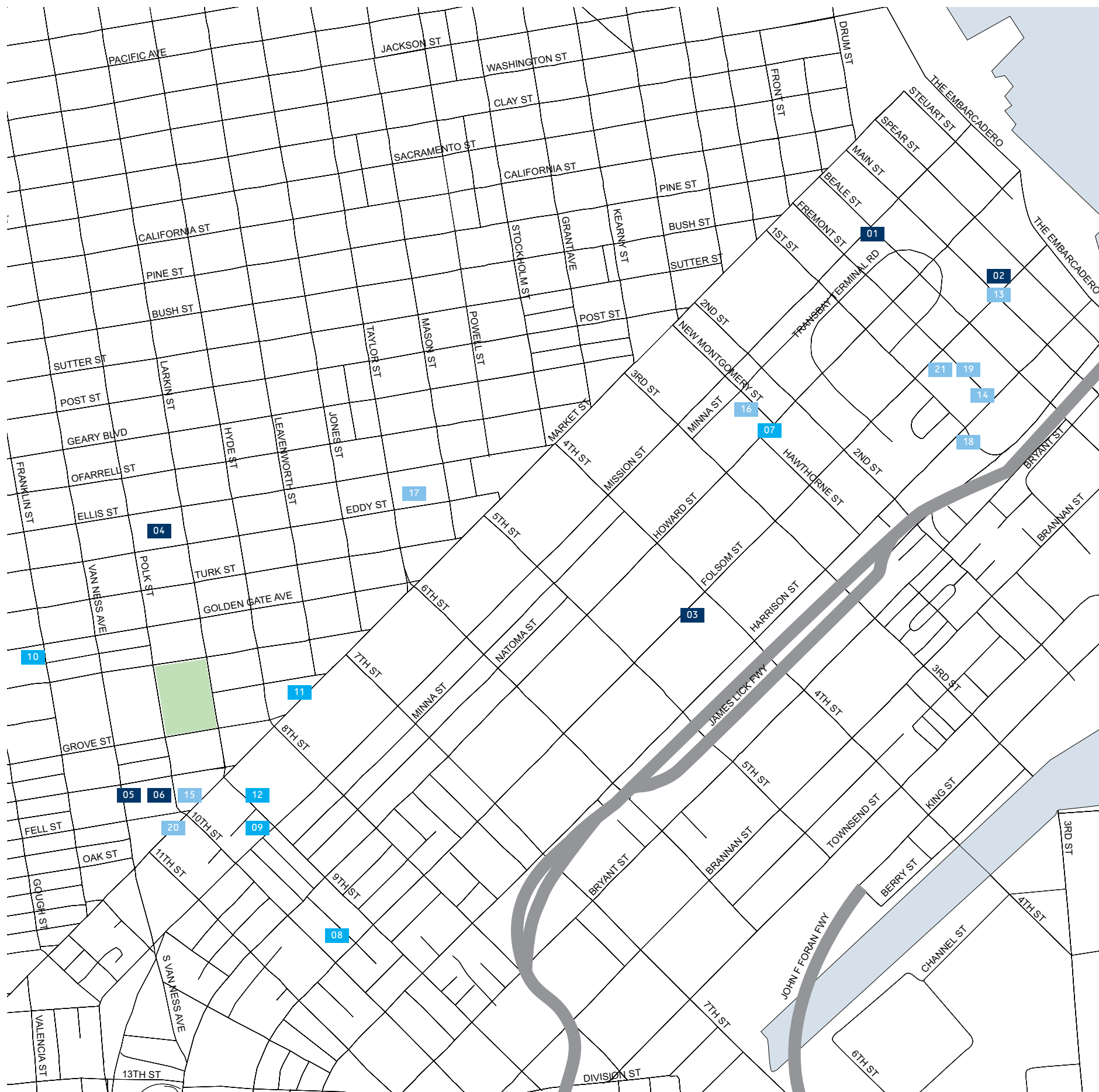
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- 7 One Hawthorne, 1 Hawthorne St.
Developer: Jackson Pacific Ventures
Architect: EHDD; Ezra Mersey
- 8 Bishop Swing Community House, 275 10th St.
Developer:
Episcopal Community Service of SF
Architect: Herman Coliver Locus
- 9 10th & Mission, 1340 Mission St.
Developer: Mercy Housing
Architect: KMD Architects
- 10 Mary Helen Rogers Senior Community, 701 Golden Gate Ave.
Developer: Mission Housing;
Devine & Gong; John Stewart Co.
Architect: HKIT Architects
- 11 Trinity Plaza Apartments, 1169 Market St.
Developer: Trinity Properties
Architect: Arquitectonica
- 12 Edith de Witt Senior Housing, 66 Ninth St.
Developer: Mercy Housing
Architect: KMD Architects

APPROVED

- 13 201 Folsom St.
Developer: Tishman Speyer
Architect: Heller Manus
- 14 333 Harrison St.
Developer: Emerald Fund
Architect: David Baker + Partners
- 15 1390 Market St.
Developer: Archstone-Smith;
Conroe Ventures
Architect: Heller Manus
- 16 140 New Montgomery St.
Developer: Wilson Meany Sullivan
Architect: Hornberger + Worstell;
Page & Turnbull
- 17 Eddy & Taylor Family Housing, 168 Eddy St.
Developer: TNDC
Architect: David Baker + Partners
- 18 One Rincon Hill (Phase II), 511 Harrison St.
Developer: Urban West
Architect: Solomon Cordwell Buenz
- 19 The Californian, 375 Fremont St.
Developer: Fifield Companies
Architect: Richard Keating
- 20 10th & Market, 1401-1411 Market St.
Developer: Crescent Heights
Architect: Heller Manus
- 21 340 Fremont St.
Developer: Jackson Pacific
Architect: Heller Manus

FEATURE
17





AN UNLIKELY POLICY TACTIC HAS HELPED STANCH THE DEVELOPMENT DAMAGE IN LOS ANGELES: THE CITY'S 2005 ORDINANCE TARGETING SMALL LOTS, WHICH ENABLES CONDO-STYLE DEVELOPMENTS ON SMALL PARCELS THAT APPEAL TO FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS. IN VENICE AND NORTH HOLLYWOOD, LOS FELIZ AND CULVER CITY, THE CITY IS SEEING A MODEST GROWTH SPURT THAT MAY YET MAKE A MAJOR DIFFERENCE IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING. [CHRISTINA CHAN](#) READS THE FINE PRINT.

SMALL LOTS, BIG DEAL



Opposite page: Rock Row, Eagle Rock, Heyday Partnership; Clockwise from top left: Fay Avenue Arts District Dwellings, Culver City, Modative; Brooks 2, Venice, William Adams Architects; Washington 4, Marina Del Rey, William Adams Architects; HUTs, Los Angeles, Workplays Studio; Cottage Lofts, Los Feliz, Workplays Studio.

Several years ago, Los Angeles' principal city planner Jane Blumenfeld approached David Reddy of R & D Architects about a Venice condominium project he had designed. Though condos, the units were conceived as freestanding houses with generous provisions for light and air. Blumenfeld was interested in using the project as an example of what might be possible under a new ordinance then in the works.

That first draft became what is known as the City of Los Angeles Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance. Passed in 2005, the ordinance has created a unique housing option that is neither a traditional single-family home nor a condominium. The law allows architects and developers to subdivide an existing commercial or multifamily lot into smaller parcels, and build properties that from the ground up essentially have their own foundations, walls, and roofs.

These hybrid homes provide an alternative to condominium or apartment living that is still more affordable than single-family residences in the same neighborhood. Instead of the homeowner association dues that come with condominium ownership, small lot buyers have the benefit of fee-simple ownership in exchange for adherence to restrictions that typically prohibit owners from painting their home a particular color, for instance, or significantly altering the building's exterior. The upshot is changing the residential face of LA—and offering a rare dose of optimism for the city's developers and architects.

Now that the first crop of nearly a dozen properties has sold, projects are beginning to dot the map from Venice to Sherman Oaks to Eagle Rock, and everywhere in between. According to Ric Abramson of Workplays, these homes are well suited to both first-time homebuyers and those who want the benefits of homeownership without the hassles of property upkeep.

Many of these developments sport a decidedly modern aesthetic with clean, geometric exterior forms and open floor plans with lofty interiors. Sustainability is another common thread, incorporating green building materials, natural light and ventilation, and high-efficiency HVAC systems.

While the program can be a boon for homebuyers, it poses its share of challenges for architects. According to Reddy, small lot projects have very different kinds of design challenges than do condominiums, even though the two types of projects are alike in many ways. "Each small lot property is considered separately," he said. "And it requires working

through the different and sometimes competing agendas between planning and building and safety."

And others note that small lot projects are hardly immune from the economic downturn. Derek Leavitt, of the newly formed architecture firm Modative, has worked on a handful of small lot projects and calls the current economic climate a double-edged sword. Dropping real estate values have caused two of his firm's small lot projects to stall—the seven-unit Faye Avenue Art District Dwellings and the six-unit Venice Boulevard Urban Dwellings. But the long term may provide more opportunities in this market niche, he said. "As land prices and construction costs continue to drop, it makes small lot subdivision projects more feasible."

Michael Pinto, design principal of Osborn Architects, has also contended with shifting economic realities while trying to navigate the approval process. Developers purchased land for Osborn's Cumpston project with the intent to create five separate units for sale. But city officials determined that the site was fit for only four units, a decision Pinto is attempting to appeal. "The financial feasibility of four is sketchy in this economy," Pinto said. "We're pushing for five."

The full impact of the small lot ordinance remains to be seen. Despite the small number of projects in the pipeline, Reddy thinks it has the potential to significantly reshape housing in Los Angeles. "These projects change the densities in neighborhoods," he said. But, he added, "It doesn't increase it to the extent one would have with conventional condominium projects or apartment buildings."

So what's next on the horizon? Ocean breezes and sandy beaches might soon be going hand-in-hand with some upcoming small lot projects. Gail Goldberg, the city's director of planning, is working on a policy initiative that would allow for increased density along the Los Angeles coast, and small lot projects could well become a component of such coastal-area upzoning.

Some believe that even if small lot numbers could reach five to ten percent of residential neighborhoods, it would make a big difference in keeping the city affordable—and in style. "It's an attractive choice for some people who are looking for housing," Abramson said.

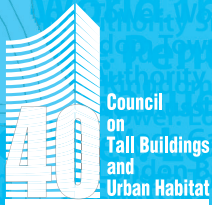
FREELANCE WRITER CHRISTINA CHAN IS BASED IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

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AUGUST

WEDNESDAY 19
EXHIBITION OPENING
Katharyn Addcox,
Mitra Adham, Jim Akers,
Mohammad Alinejad, et al.
California Open Exhibition
The Artists' Gallery
2903 Santa Monica Blvd.,
Santa Monica
www.taggallery.net

THURSDAY 20
EVENT
AIA Pasadena & Foothill
Awards Bus Tour
5:30 p.m.
Assistance League of
Pasadena
820 East California Blvd.,
Pasadena
www.aiapf.org

WITH THE KIDS
Art After Hours
5:00 p.m.
Monterey Museum of Art
MMA La Mirada
720 Via Mirada, Monterey
www.montereyart.org

SATURDAY 22
EVENT
Open: Drawings and
Objects by Architects
6:00 p.m.
Edward Cella
Art+Architecture
6018 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.edwardcella.com

WITH THE KIDS
Union Station Family Tour
11:00 a.m.
Union Station
800 North Alameda St.,
Los Angeles
www.laconservancy.org

SUNDAY 23
EXHIBITION OPENING
The Watts Towers:
50 Years Inspiring Art
Watts Towers Art Center
1727 East 107th St.,
Los Angeles
artscenecal.com/WattsTowers
.html

MONDAY 24
EXHIBITION OPENING
Robert Glenn Ketchum
An Evolving Perspective of
Nature
College of the
Canyons Art Gallery
26455 Rockwell Canyon Rd.,
Santa Clarita
www.canyons.edu

WEDNESDAY 26
EXHIBITION OPENING
Theresa Hak Kyung Cha
Earth
Berkeley Art Museum and
Pacific Film Archive
2625 Durant Ave.,
Berkeley
www.bampfa.berkeley.edu

THURSDAY 27
LECTURE
Mel Gordon
Jewish Theater Through the
Eyes of Chagall
7:00 p.m.
Contemporary
Jewish Museum
736 Mission St.,
San Francisco
www.thecjm.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
The Shape of Color:
Selections from the
Fullerton College
Permanent Art Collection
Fullerton College Art Gallery
321 East Chapman Ave.,
Fullerton
art.fullcoll.edu

SATURDAY 29
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Sweet Streets: Art Inspired
by Japanese Street Fashion
Nucleus Art Gallery
210 East Main St., Alhambra
www.gallerynucleus.com

Pomme Chan, Deanne Cheuk,
Naja Conrad-Hansen, Aya
Kato, Pandarosa, Marguerite
Sauvage, Alberto Seveso,
Sonya Suhariyan, Yoshi
Tajima, Eveline Tarunadjaja
Redefining the Line:
Art Nouveau &
The Female Figure
CSU Fullerton Art Gallery
800 North State College Blvd.,
Fullerton
www.fullerton.edu

WITH THE KIDS
Garden Concerts for Kids:
Justin Roberts
4:00 p.m.
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr.,
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

SEPTEMBER

TUESDAY 1
EXHIBITION OPENING
Out-of-Bounds:
Images in the Margins of
Medieval Manuscripts
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr.,
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

THURSDAY 3
EVENTS
First Thursday Forum
6:00 p.m.
Denizen Design Gallery
8600 Venice Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.denizendesigngallery
.com

Get Engaged
7:00 p.m.
Museum of
Contemporary Art
250 South Grand Ave.,
Los Angeles
www.moca.org

LECTURES
Susan G. Solomon
The Architecture of
Community
7:00 p.m.
Contemporary
Jewish Museum
736 Mission St.,
San Francisco
www.thecjm.org

Sebastian Mariscal,
Lloyd Russell, Jennifer Luce,
Jonathan Segal
Mix Roundtable: Part 2
7:00 p.m.
Museum of Contemporary
Art San Diego
700 Prospect St.,
La Jolla
www.mcascd.org

FRIDAY 4
EVENT
AIA Pasadena & Foothill
First Friday Forum
7:30 a.m.
Brookside Country Club
1133 North Rosemont Ave.,
Pasadena
www.aiapf.org

SATURDAY 5
EXHIBITION OPENING
Rob Mintz
Jecca Plus One
Orange County Center for
Contemporary Art
117 North Sycamore St.,
Santa Ana
www.occca.org

SUNDAY 6
LECTURE
Stephane Castelluccio
French Royal Bronzes
Collections from
Louis XIV to the Revolution
3 p.m.
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr.,
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

TUESDAY 8
EXHIBITION OPENING
There's a Mystery There:
Sendak on Sendak
Contemporary
Jewish Museum
736 Mission St.,
San Francisco
www.thecjm.org

WEDNESDAY 9
LECTURE
Alaa Khaled and
Salwa Rashad
A Walk in the City
7:00 p.m.
MAK Center for Art and
Architecture
835 North Kings Rd.,
West Hollywood
www.makcenter.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Irving Penn: Small Trades
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr.,
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

Fielden Harper, Sue Keane,
Caryn Baumgartner
The Artists' Gallery
2903 Santa Monica Blvd.,
Santa Monica
www.taggallery.net

Bruce Conner
Gallery Paule Anglim
14 Geary St.,
San Francisco
www.gallerypauleanglim.com

THURSDAY 10
EXHIBITION OPENING
Kyle Reicher
Icons of Childhood
Braunstein/Quay Gallery
430 Clementina St.,
San Francisco
www.bquayartgallery.com

SATURDAY 12
LECTURE
Looking at Rothko
11:00 a.m.
Museum of
Contemporary Art
250 South Grand Ave.,
Los Angeles
www.moca.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Myron Conan Dyal
Billy Shire Fine Arts
5790 Washington Blvd.,
Culver City
www.billyshirefinearts.com

WITH THE KIDS
Family Festival
10:00 a.m.
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr.,
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

SUNDAY 13
LECTURES
Antoinette LaFarge
1:00 p.m.
Laguna Art Museum
307 Cliff Dr.,
Laguna Beach
www.lagunaartmuseum.org

Lynda Benglis
3:00 p.m.
Museum of
Contemporary Art
250 South Grand Ave.,
Los Angeles
www.moca.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Latitudes:
Latin American Masters from
the FEMSA Collection
The Baroque World of
Fernando Botero
The Bowers Museum
2002 North Main St.,
Santa Ana
www.bowers.org

TUESDAY 15
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Debi Nowak-Hawkes
Portraits in Oil and Charcoal
Buenaventura Gallery
700 East Santa Clara St.,
Ventura
www.buenaventuragallery.org

Sally Mann
Cy Twombly
Gagosian Gallery
456 North Camden Dr.,
Beverly Hills
www.gagosian.com

THURSDAY 17
LECTURE
Craig Walzer
The Art of Listening:
Oral Histories from Voice of
Witness and StoryCorps
7:00 p.m.
Contemporary Jewish
Museum
736 Mission St.,
San Francisco
www.thecjm.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Dexter Dalwood
Endless Night
Gagosian Gallery
456 North Camden Dr.,
Beverly Hills
www.gagosian.com

SUNDAY 27
EXHIBITION OPENING
Luis Melendez:
Master of the
Spanish Still Life
Los Angeles County
Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.lacma.org



BRIAN FORREST

FEATHERED EDGE
Ball-Nogues Studio
MOCA Pacific Design Center
Through November 15

Over 21 miles of colorful strings swoop down in precise catenaries from the Pacific Design Center's skylight in this installation by Los Angeles-based Ball-Nogues Studio. As the third piece in their *Suspension* series, *Feathered Edge* takes Benjamin Ball and Gaston Nogues' flair for digital modeling to a new level: They designed not only the structure itself, but also the computer program used to design the structure. The custom software calculates the lengths, positions, and colors of all the strings, which are then cut and colored (also in an automated process), and finally attached by hand to an overhead framework in the manner of latch-hook rug making. When sunlight streams down through the rainbow-hued netting, the effect is ethereal, with overlapping colors shifting according to the angle from which they're viewed.



BENNY CHAN

TRAFFIC
Benny Chan
Pasadena Museum of California Art
Through September 20

Architectural photographer Benny Chan lends a majesty to Los Angeles gridlock in a series of ten aerial prints at the Pasadena Museum of California Art. Taken during the height of rush hour using photographic equipment designed specially for this project, each seven-foot-high print offers a view of the sprawling landscape from a rarely-seen vantage point. Cloverleaves, river coastlines, rooftops, occasional foliage, and shadows cast by the rush-hour sun are all captured in crisp detail—except when swallowed by atmospheric haze. The scenes' serenity and detachment, however, are belied by the photographer's pointed social critique. "Traffic jams in a megalopolis the size of Los Angeles," according to Chan, "are a microcosm of numerous other crises threatening our continued existence. Our reluctance to take action sooner underscores our complacency, procrastination, and greed."

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER AUGUST 19, 2009



TALK TO ME

Conversations with Frank Gehry
Barbara Isenberg
Knopf, \$40.00

Frank Gehry has made a dizzying ascent from disparaged outsider to the pinnacle of success. Yet some skeptics remain unconvinced, and the snipers are still busy. MIT's Stata Center leaking, reflections off Disney Hall overheating neighboring apartments, the scales of the Bilbao Guggenheim becoming discolored: Let's pillory the architect. This is a country that glorifies and resents celebrity in equal measure. No sooner has someone been put on a pedestal than a faction wants to pull him down. Frank Lloyd Wright was so convinced of his superiority that he shrugged off every attack. Gehry has worked hard to overcome his insecurities, but they simmer

just below the surface. That makes a frank conversation with Frank unusually revealing, and few have done it better than arts reporter Barbara Isenberg.

For anyone who has followed Gehry's career over the past 45 years or heard him confess his fears and frustrations, there are few surprises in this tantalizingly brief oral history. What makes it so compelling—to readers and a future biographer—is the immediacy of the narrative. Even the familiar stories—inevitably including the carp in the bathtub—sound fresh, and there are sharp insights on the creative process, the business of architecture, the diffusion of computer software, and the dynamics of working with clients. Isenberg deftly introduces each thematic section to provide a chronological account of a roller-coaster practice. She puts you in his office as Gehry does a lightning sketch to illustrate an idea, hunts for papers on a cluttered desk—or wanders off to ask a colleague for the name of an artist he has forgotten. You share his humiliation as he recalls

how guests at a smart dinner party expressed contempt for his work and a waitress tipped a dish of buttery vegetables over his new suit. And you can exult with him as he learns that he has defied conventional wisdom and won the competition to design Disney Hall.

Such dramatic moments will enliven the biopic—starring Brad Pitt, perhaps?—to be made after his death, but for now Gehry is very much alive and hyperactive, despite the hold on several high-profile projects. These conversations reveal the range and depth of his artistry and the fierce determination that has propelled him forward. They explore his understanding of art and the inspiration he has derived from artists as disparate as Robert Rauschenberg, Claes Slutter, and Hieronymus Bosch. Gehry recalls the installations he has done for exhibitions at the LA County Museum of Art and the way that experience fed into his acclaimed art museums. "There's no such thing as a neutral environment," he asserts in one interview. "The white box has a pristine quality that

most art can't live up to."

"You can design dumb, simple buildings that you know people will understand and like, and that seems to me talking down," Gehry tells Isenberg. For years he worked under the radar in LA, but he insists that from the time he launched his practice in 1962, he never took on a job he didn't want to do. "I pride myself that I run a tight ship," he remarks. "People think that somebody who does this kind of out-there work must be irresponsible... They characterize it as an ego trip by superstar architects. Now in some cases that may be true, but not in mine."

Barry Diller, the Hollywood studio head turned entrepreneur who commissioned the IAC Building in New York, offers a succinct verdict on Gehry. "He's not expensive. That reputation is totally undeserved from my experience. He's absolutely not difficult. Ornerly? Yes. Nicely, wonderfully ornerly." **LOS ANGELES-BASED WRITER MICHAEL WEBB IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.**



Left: Journalist Barbara Isenberg takes on an ornery subject. Right: Gehry's Disney Hall.

COURTESY KNOPF

The Le Corbusier Code

Le Corbusier and the Occult
J.K. Birksted
M.I.T. Press, \$44.95

Le Corbusier had an incalculable effect on the architecture and planning of the last century, a mercurial and inescapable influence felt today. Kenneth Frampton calls him the most famous and certainly most controversial architect of the 20th century, a description that encompasses his problematic thinking, his theories about cities, his modernist polemic, and most of all, his buildings, which created an architectural ascendancy that spread throughout the Western world. In 1987, I visited the centennial exhibition entitled *Le Corbusier: Architect of the Century* at the Hayward Gallery in London. The show, which was organized by the Arts Council of

Great Britain in cooperation with the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris, ranged over the architect's career, from its beginnings in Switzerland in 1907 to works still under construction at the time of his death in 1965. Like a dormant seed, his work has been preserved in rhetoric, protected by 50 years of modernism—until now.

For the first half of the last century, Le Corbusier conducted explorations of architecture and planning that revolutionized the discipline. Extant to this work was his innovation in building tectonics, materiality, physical planning concepts, and new building typologies. And for the next half of the last century

historians and practioners exalted him posthumously. While a half-century of historians have given elevated meaning to his explorations, only recently has research yielded secret and possibly esoteric intentions embodied in his work. Architectural historian Robert Coombs investigated the mystical themes in the architect's chapel at Ronchamp, uncovering symbols of Marian programs and references to the Cathar Grail, Gnosticism, the Virgin Tomb, divine numbers, sacred geometry, alchemy, and other iconographies. Of particular note was the relationship of the three primary exterior walls of the chapel **continued on page 24**



Église de Saint-Pierre, Firminy-Vert (1970).

J.K. BIRKSTED



COURTESY GUY NORDENSON AND ASSOCIATES

SHATTERING CLASSES

*Engineered Transparency:
The Technical, Visual, and Spatial Effects of Glass*
Edited by Michael Bell and Jeannie Kim
Princeton Architectural Press, \$65.00

The domination of glass as *the* material for architectural expression since the middle of the last century is evident in a comparison of Manhattan's skyline today with a photograph of the same before 1952. That year marks the completion of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Lever House on Park Avenue, the first all-glass curtain wall exterior in midtown Manhattan. A number of factors coincided to displace stone by glass: advances in structural engineering and facade systems, the fabrication of ever-larger pieces of flat glass, a need for more daylight in deeper floor

plates, the improved thermal properties of glazing systems, and a desire for expressing lightness and transparency. Over 50 years later, these considerations—structure, fabrication, performance, vision, and metaphor—remain the domains for researching and evaluating glass in architecture.

Engineered Transparency, the product of a symposium of the same name at Columbia University in September 2007, a three-day event (sponsored by Oldcastle Glass with *The Architect's Newspaper*), explores these themes. A collaboration between Columbia

University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (GSAPP) and the Department of Civil Engineering and Engineering Mechanics, both symposium and book are equal parts architecture and engineering, theory and practice, eye candy and data. The further involvement of the Technische Universität, Dresden's Institute of Building Construction, guarantees a balance between technical material research and what Dean Mark Wigley describes as GSAPP's "radical experimentation...as a laboratory on the future of the built environment."

The book's five main chapters—essays, projects, technical innovations (material and structural), and the visual and spatial aspects of glass—follow this architecture-engineering split, though the symposium proceedings try to overcome such a condition. The first chapter links the current exploration in glass to its historical impetus, primarily Paul Scheerbart's 1914 book *Glasarchitektur*, but also Joseph Paxton's Crystal

Palace of 1851 before it and Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky's influential essay "Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal" from 1964. Each essay mines the various qualities of glass and its effects, from its manufacture and structural properties to the material's varying degrees of transparency. What the essays make up for in diversity they lack in breadth of investigation, merely scratching the surface, as it were, of the myriad theoretical and practical issues surrounding the material. The same can be said about the projects and technical papers that follow, and this deficiency is a reflection of the symposium format and its regurgitation in book form, more than the result of individual contributions. A broad range of material is presented in the book and the companion DVD that features symposium highlights, but it is far from a complete picture. Each paper can be seen as a starting point or provocation for the reader's continued investigation elsewhere.

Preceding these chapters is a brief portfolio of the buildings of SANAA, the collaboration between Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, the former giving the symposium's keynote lecture. Their 2006 Glass Pavilion at the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio sets a benchmark for the current apotheosis and future potential of glass in architecture, an embodiment of the considerations of the last century in a decidedly 21st-century idiom. The design minimizes structure to the extent that the floor-to-ceiling spans of frameless, laminated glass seem to hold up the roof; sophisticated mechanical balancing and daylighting systems allow this single material to predominate; and numerous curved glass corners creates refractions, reflections, and layers to become, as Beatriz Colomina describes, "optical devices without any visible mechanisms ... [where the viewer] is suspended in the view itself." Most uniquely, where editor Michael Bell and others point out the importance of insulated glaz-

The Glass Pavilion at the Toledo Museum of Art, designed by SANAA (2006).

ing units (IGUs) in facades, the Glass Pavilion expands these double layers to the scale of the building itself. Individual rooms defined by glass walls are held apart, with the inaccessible cavity space acting as a thermal buffer and becoming "the real space of the project," again in Colomina's words.

SANAA's pavilion is a perfect manifestation of the book's title phrase, the merging of the technical and the phenomenal aspects of glass. Research and engineering allow the material's exploitation in the design, while the pavilion's spatial experiences are unanticipated by the material's technical input. *Engineered Transparency* provides a decent theoretical and technical background for a contemporary understanding of glass, one that leaves few areas unexplored, if only preliminarily so.

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Le Corbusier, from his series *Poème de l'Angle Droit* (1955).

THE LE CORBUSIER CODE

continued from page 22 to cosmic references to the Annunciation, Assumption, and Coronation of the Virgin Mary. There seems to have been a conscious triple entendre that wove building form, program, and esoteric intent. This drama is unique when compared to the conventional wisdom on this building's genius, and it brought up new questions, at least within the mainstream, on the nature of Le Corbusier's work.

In the book *Le Corbusier and the Occult*, Dr. Jan K. Birksted has a tenacious fascination with the narrative of Le Corbusier's life and the history of his evolving relationship with the occult. Birksted develops an in-depth link between his social history and his associations with secret societies, Freemasonry, Pythagoreanism, and other mystic traditions. Largely obtained from archival research of new documents from undiscovered and local sources, this work posits that the formative experiences of Charles-Édouard Jeanneret's childhood in La Chaux-de-Fonds, his birthplace in the Swiss Jura, was a powerful influence on the synthetic fusion of these esoteric preoccupations and his self-reinvention and sub-

sequent practice in Paris. The Loge L'Amitié, the Masonic lodge, was the genesis of his ideas as an embodiment of the "rectitude" and "exactitude" of the emblematic Masonic symbol and the Imago Mundi (horizontal plane representing physicality) and Axis Mundi (vertical axis representing transcendence). Replete with circumstantial evidence, the book gives reason to believe that Le Corbusier's personal cosmology was a plausible appropriation and possible fabric of intention to his architecture. Despite these discoveries, the degree to which Le Corbusier himself was interested in a public revelation is unclear. He was discriminating in his self-image, and careful about the morphology of his ideas. Le Corbusier credited occult capacities to himself, yet did not belong to any occult group. In any event, the canons of the occult are (supposedly) secret.

Birksted's book serves as a scholarly addition to the understanding of Le Corbusier and the importance of his diverse work and continuing influence. As others have said, and I agree, Birksted's writing is an acquired taste. It is interesting sometimes, slack at others. It wanders off path, stranding the reader with irrelevant facts, voluminous quotations, tangential anecdotes,

and lengthy endnotes. The graphic images are often weak. I would have liked to see more in-depth analysis of esoteric concepts and practices directly related to Le Corbusier's work. The book is, however, refreshing in its delivery of new material on Le Corbusier, which for 50 years has been predictable and repetitious. The book meticulously traces the unraveling of Le Corbusier's private, social, and professional interests as they informed his arcane pursuits. The focus on his early life gives a better picture of the architect and his syncretic purposefulness in the context of his later architectural works. Birksted's material is significant, and he has provided a rigorous contribution to the theoretical discourse in architecture as well as an impetus for continued investigation. The pseudonym "Le Corbusier" means "the raven-like one," which seems a fitting association of cunning and intelligence, cloaked here in supernatural speculations. *Le Corbusier and the Occult* reveals the complex, comprehensive, and clandestine nature of Le Corbusier's architecture—a place for dwelling, and a temple for man.

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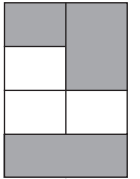
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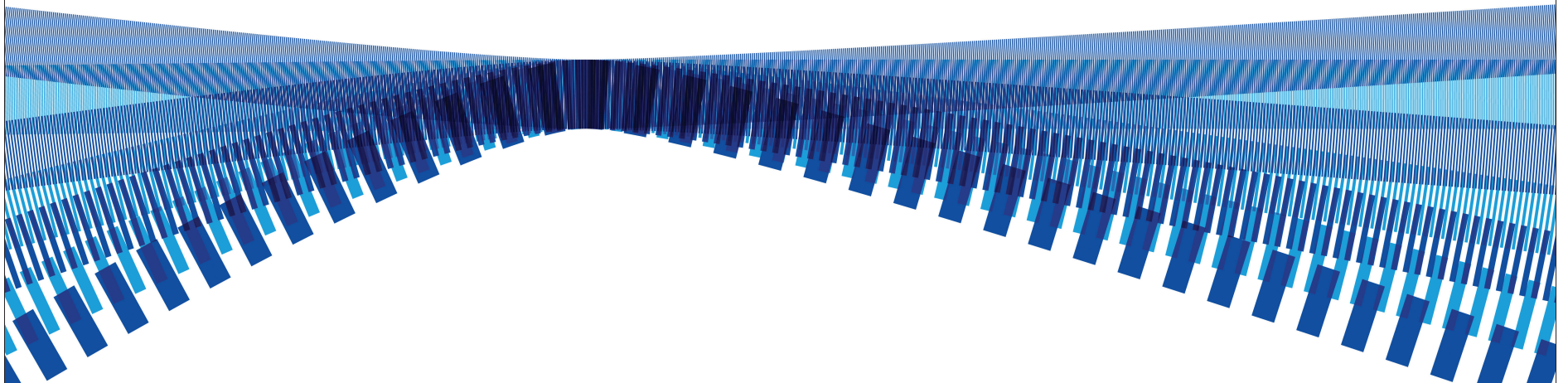
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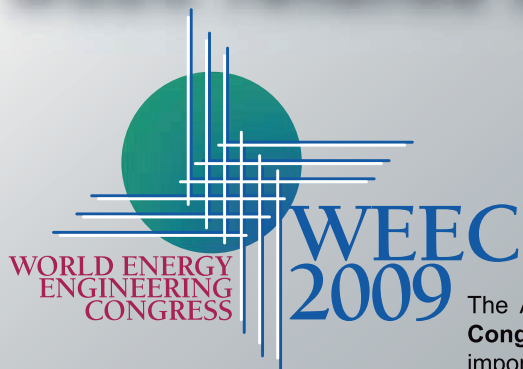


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Q&A> MICHELLE KAUFMANN



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The Future of Prefab



AN associate editor **Lydia Lee** contacted Northern California prefab pioneer **Michelle Kaufmann** about the recent closure of her company, Michelle Kaufmann Designs (MKD). But Kaufmann had very good news to share: She is finalizing details with a partner to continue her prefabricated housing work, using new technology to make the homes available to more people. The two talked about the upcoming deal, the large-scale developments Kaufmann is working on, and what the future of prefab looks like.

AN: It's exciting to hear that your houses are going to continue to be available. How did the deal happen?

Michelle Kaufmann: It is really a small community in the prefab green space, so we knew of each other's work. However, a client of mine, who also knew the CEO of this company, thought the two of us could do some interesting things together. She invited this CEO to visit her Glidehouse [a Kaufmann design], and put the two of us in contact. That is part of the reason I am not giving up and excited about the next chapter: because our clients—many of whom are like family to me now—continue to be such great supporters and innovators in themselves.

Now that Marmol Radziner has also shut their factory, do you think the model of architect-as-manufacturer is untenable? The model may need to be rethought, but it was the right thing to do at the time. When I started out, factories didn't want to work with me. They didn't think anyone would want what we were proposing, and they were just used to building standard crap. Once we had the experience of running our own factory, we became much better factory partners, because we could say, "Look, this is possible." We couldn't approach them just as naive architects, but with a depth of knowledge, an understanding of the technology and manufacturing, so that we could have true conversations. And that takes a while. So the unfortunate thing about the closing of MKD is that we were just starting to have those discussions with more factories.

It seems like the companies that make traditional prefabs are starting to take a page out of your playbook. What do you think of Warren Buffett's company, Clayton Homes, and its \$100,000 I-House with the butterfly roof?

I think it's a great legitimizer of the idea of green prefab, and it got a lot of press. But I haven't seen it in person, so I don't know if it feels like a solid, quality structure. There's a huge difference between the standards for manufactured homes, which is what Clayton Homes produces, and modular homes, which is what the Marmol factory and ours produced. There's still this idea out there that if your home comes out of a factory, it's going to be a trailer home. But modular homes are built to the same code as site-built houses.

Bringing the price down for modern prefab is such a challenge. How do you think we'll crack that nut?

When we had our factory, it was tough to get price points down just doing one and two at a time. And with the current unpredictability in securing a home loan, that uncertainty really doesn't fit well with the requirements of a factory. When you're doing 20 at one time, that's when the price points start to get very interesting. That's part of the reason I'm very interested in working on communities, like the one in Denver.

Tell us about that project.

For Aria Denver, I'm working with Susan Powers of Urban Ventures. She's one of these developers that really believes in quality vs. quantity, and sees this new development as the future. It's going to have a mix of affordable and market-rate housing, and the plan is to take advantage of its proximity to Regis University and make it a lifetime learning community, diverse in income and age and background. We're looking at community gardens and alternative energy. There's going to be 106 houses total, and the first phase, which is eight homes, was just installed last week.

This phase was designed specifically for a group of nuns, so seven of the eight homes are townhouse units, but the eighth house will be more of a shared group space and has a particularly big kitchen. All of the homes face one another, with living rooms that open to a shared courtyard. In other parts of the community, we're designing homes where there are sliding fences, so if you decide you want to have a barbecue with your neighbor, you can open the walls between the two backyards and have one big space. We're looking at different ways design can help cultivate community.

Above: Aria Denver's modular townhouse designs. Below: A custom modular green home in Santa Barbara.

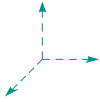
You've talked about the horrible experience of house-hunting, and how that inspired you to build your own—and then go into prefab. Has living in your custom-built home in Marin County been all that you expected?

I do love living in the middle of nowhere, but I also miss a sense of community. I think in an urban situation, you create that for yourself. But there are other models besides cities and badly designed subdivisions. In my work on these developments, I'm definitely imagining how I would like to live. These days, more people are working from home, and live apart from their extended family, so our communities are different.

What else are you working on?

I'm designing a couple of small hotels, including a 30-room fishing resort in the Bahamas, which is going to be zero-energy. It's going to be a great environment to show how green can be beautiful, while educating visitors with things like monitors that will show people how much water and energy they're using. While they're in this beautiful natural habitat, it's the perfect time to remind people of what's worth preserving.





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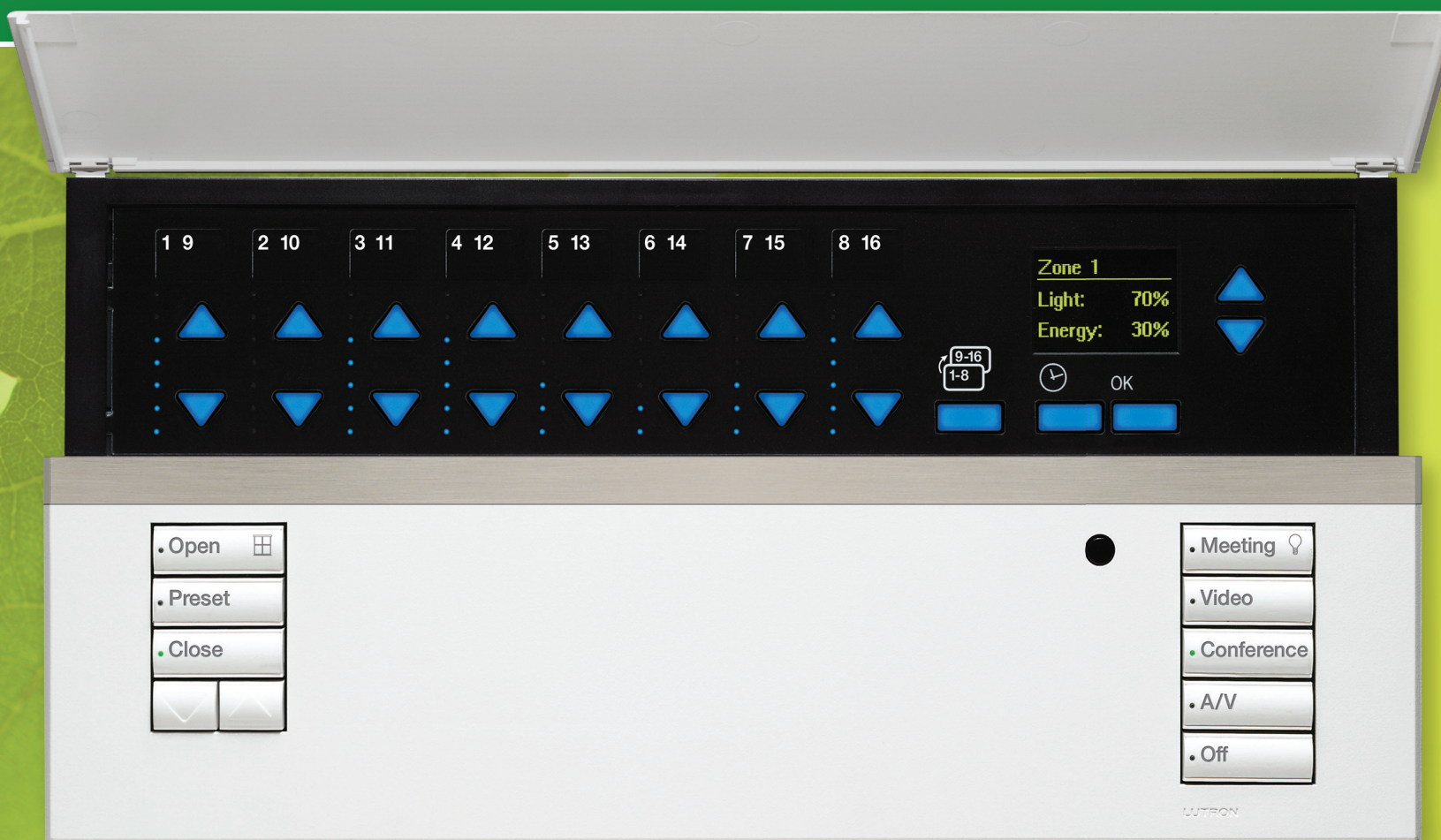
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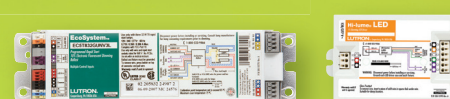
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